

The Ten Principles: Theoretical Implications of Volitional Death in Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara* (A Study and Translation)

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In considering the unusual success Najm al-Dīn Kubrā must have seen in training spiritual heirs, a success said to have led to the attainment of twelve major Sufi saints and to have lent him the hagiographical title “the saint-manufacturing shaykh,” surely the pedagogical particularities of his writings merit attention.¹ Abū al-Jannāb Aḥmad b. ʿUmar (d. 618/1221), known famously as Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, seems to have excelled in composing treatises that brought descriptive order to visionary experience, such as his *Fawāʾiḥ al-Jamāl wa Fawāʾiḥ al-Jalāl*, or brought unity and efficiency to the multifarious pursuit of ethical perfection, such as *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara*.² Kubrā's

¹ Hamid Algar refers to this title (*shaykh-i walī-tarāsh*) in his article outlining the life and works of Kubrā. See “Kobrawiyya i. The Eponym,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, Online Edition, July 15, 2009 (www.iranicaonline.org), as well as Algar's “Kubrā, Shaykh Abū ʿl-Djannāb Aḥmad b. ʿUmar Nadīm al-Dīn,” in *the Encyclopædia of Islam*, second edition (EI²), vol. 5, pp. 300–301, here p. 300. For an example from the hagiographical tradition, see ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-Uns min Ḥaḍarat al-Quds*, ed. Mahdī Tawḥīdīpūr (Tehran: Saʿdī, 1366 *hijrī-shamsī*), p. 419. The most famous of Kubrā's pupils are said to be Majd al-Dīn Baghdādī (d. 616/1219), Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥammūya (d. 650/1252), Bābā Kamāl Jandī (d. 672/1273), Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (d. 658/1260), Raḍī al-Dīn ʿAlī Lālā (d. 642/1244), and Najm al-Dīn Dāya Rāzī (d. 654/1256), as outlined by Algar in the introduction to his translation of Rāzī's *Mirṣād al-ʿIbād min al-Mabdaʾ ilā al-Maʿād*, namely, *The Path of God's Bondsmen, from Origin to Return* (North Haledon, New Jersey: Islamic Publications International, 1980), p. 5. It is usually suggested that Kubrā's title of esteem derives from the Qurʾānic phrase “the greatest catastrophe” (*al-ṭāmma al-kubrā*, 79:34), hyperbolically underscoring the prowess he displayed in scholarly debates before his full immersion in the spiritual way. At least one early Kubrawī initiate, however, refers to the name as modifying the phrase “sign of God” (*āyat Allāh al-kubrā*), in a manner similar to the designation (*āyatallāh al-ʿuẓmā*) used for the Shīʿī *marājiʿ al-taqlīd*. See Muhammad Isa Waley, “A Kubrawī Manual of Sufism: The *Fuṣūṣ al-ʿādāb* of Yaḥyā Bākharzī,” *The Legacy of Mediaeval Persian Sufism*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, London/New York, 1992), pp. 289–310, here p. 291. For biographical details concerning the important but neglected student Bābā Kamāl Jandī, I have referred to an article by Devin DeWeese, “Bābā Kamāl Jandī and the Kubrawī Tradition among the Turks of Central Asia,” *Der Islam*, 71:1 (1994), pp. 58–94.

² The same could be said, of course, for treatises by Kubrā composed before *Fawāʾiḥ al-Jamāl* and integrated into it, such as *Risālat al-Taṣawwuf* or *Risāla fī al-Khalwa*, the latter of which has been

writings reveal an author both profound and practical, but also distinctively systematic. Moreover, the impact Kubrā made on later adherents to the Kubrawī Order seems to have stemmed in part from his ability to intertwine theory and practice in his writings.³

Especially revealing in this regard is his short treatise composed in Arabic, *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara* (The Ten Principles), also sometimes referred to as *Aqrab al-Ṭuruq ilā Allāh* (The Shortest of Paths to God), and also as *Uṣūl al-Wuṣūl* (The Principles of Attainment).⁴ On the one hand, the treatise serves as a neatly organized overview of ten essential ethical traits to be mastered by the wayfarer, along with the significance and often the means to those traits: Repentance (*al-Tawba*), Renunciation (*al-Zuhd*), Reliance (*al-Tawakkul*), Contentment (*al-Qanāʿa*), Seclusion (*al-ʿUzla*), Inseparableness from Remembrance (*Mulāzamat al-Dhikr*), Concentration upon God the Exalted (*al-tawajjuh ilā Allāh taʿālā*), Patience (*al-ṣabr*), Watchfulness (*al-murāqaba*), and Satisfaction (*al-riḍā*). In this regard, it is also possible that the ten principles loosely trace the development of the wayfarer, or repeating cycles of development, who begins by repenting and ends acquiring complete satisfaction with God's decrees, undergoing a process of committing oneself to the path (repentance, renunciation, reliance on God, contentment), followed by ascetic exercises (seclusion, perpetual remembrance, concentration upon God), and ending with the ethical tools for pious longevity and constancy (patience, watchfulness, satisfaction).⁵ On the other hand, the treatise reveals Kubrā's elusive theoretical style. It is a text concerned with, if however subtly and in a different terminological context, some of the very questions — questions concerning *wujūd* and the self — that would be confronted in considerable detail by later Kubrawīs

translated by Gerhard Böwering, along with an introduction and comments. See "Kubrā's Treatise on Spiritual Retreat, *Risāla fi'l-Khalwa*," *al-Abhath*, vol. 54 (2006), pp. 7–34. A French translation of the treatise, along with excerpts from *Risālat al-Taṣawwuf*, can be found in Paul Ballanfat's *La pratique du soufisme: quatorze petits traités* (Nîmes: Éditions de l'éclat, 2002), pp. 213–222 and pp. 245–258 respectively.

³ Indeed, Waley's justified observation that the Kubrawī Order's most notable features "are its discipline and methodology, and its distinctive contributions to the interpretation of the Holy Koran" must be seen in light of Najm al-Dīn himself, whose personality and writings seem to have left an unfaltering mark on the order. See Waley, "A Kubrawī Manual of Sufism: The *Fuṣūṣ al-ādāb* of Yaḥyā Bākhārī," p. 289. Kubrā's careful piety, which also seems to have left its mark on his students, can be seen in Fritz Meier's article and his translation of Kubrā's *Ādāb al-Murīdīn*, "A Book of Etiquette for Sufis," *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, tr. John O'Kane, ed. Bernd Radtke (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 49–92.

⁴ Najīb Māyil-Hirawī lists other names associated with the treatise: *Risālat al-Ṭuruq*, *Risālat al-Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq*, *Risāla-i Ṭarīqat-Nāma*, and *Risāla dar Bayān-i Ṭarīq-i Shuṭṭār* or *Ṭarīq-i Shuṭṭārīyya*. I agree with Māyil-Hirawī that *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara* is probably the earliest title given to the treatise, because of its appearance in the titles of commentaries, including Hamadānī's translation of the title as *Risāla-i Dah Qāʿida*, the Persian equivalent of *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara*. See *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara*, ed. Najīb Māyil-Hirawī (Intishārāt-i Mawlā: Tehran, 1984), pp. 14–15.

⁵ The commentator ʿAbd al-Ghafūr Lārī alludes to a certain degree of developmental order. See *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara*, pp. 47–8.

such as ‘Alā’ al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 736/1336)⁶ and Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadānī (d. 786/1385).⁷ Indeed Hamadānī finds Kubrā’s allusions to these more profound theoretical concerns so subtle, that, in his Persian translation of the text, Hamadānī not only adds lines of self-composed poetry and explanations of certain key ideas, but also brings out Kubrā’s theoretical suggestions, often through very minor emendations.⁸

Aside from being translated by Hamadānī, the “Ten Principles” was also translated into Persian and commented upon by ‘Abd al-Ghafūr Lārī (d. 912/1506), known as Raḍī al-Dīn, a Naqshbandī and top pupil of the famous ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), and — like Jāmī — an advocate of Akbarī cosmology, an advocacy apparent in his treatment of Kubrā’s text.⁹ Like Hamadānī, Lārī sees profound intimations concerning existence in Kubrā’s short treatise, thus, for example, extending Kubrā’s comments on repentance (*tawba*) to the Oneness of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and Muḥyi al-Dīn ibn al-‘Arabī’s (d. 638/1240) comments on the agency of the sinner in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*.¹⁰ In this regard, Lārī’s commentary abounds with the insights and distinctive terms of Ibn ‘Arabī, who is referred to often as “Shaykh Muḥyi al-Dīn” and mentioned by name in Lārī’s comments on Kubrā’s introduction and on eight of Kubrā’s ten principles.¹¹ Lārī’s comments also hint at a possible cause for the treatise’s high regard:

⁶ An excellent book concerning the life and thought of Simnānī, one that includes a discussion of his views on cosmology and volitional death (matters pertinent to this article and important to Kubrawī adherents), is Jamal J. Elias’ *The Throne Carrier of God: The Life and Thought of ‘Alā’ ad-dawla as-Simnānī* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1995).

⁷ Aside from his textual and theoretical legacy, Hamadānī is of great historical significance, on account of his reviving the extinct Kubrawī line in Central Asia and his ongoing legendary status in Kashmir. In that regard, see Devin DeWeese’s “The Eclipse of the Kubrawīyah in Central Asia,” *Iranian Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1/2, Soviet and North American Studies on Central Asia (1988), pp. 45–83, here pp. 51–2, as well as his “Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadānī and Kubrawī Hagiographical Traditions,” *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (London and New York: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1992), pp. 121–158. For a discussion of popular depictions of Hamadānī, see Jamal J. Elias, “A Second ‘Alī: The Making of Sayyid ‘Alī Hamadānī in Popular Imagination,” *The Muslim World*, vol. 90 (Fall 2000), pp. 395–419.

⁸ Marjan Molé discusses Hamadānī’s commentary-translation, known as *Risāla-i Dah Qā’ida*, as well as extant manuscripts in his “La version persane du Traité de dix principes de Najm al-Dīn Kobrā par ‘Ali b. Shihāb al-Dīn Hamadānī,” *Farhang-i Īrān-Zamīn* (Tehran), vol. 6, 1958, pp. 38–66. The version of Hamadānī’s translation used here can be found on pages 89–101, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar. Aqrab al-Ṭuruq ilā Allāh, ed. ‘Alī-Riḍā Sharīf-Muḥsinī (Nashr-i Ṣafā: Tehran, 1983). Muḥsinī has made use of Molé’s version of the text.

⁹ See Najīb Māyil-Hirawī’s biography of Lārī in his introduction to *al-Uṣūl al-‘Ashara* (Intishārāt-i Mawlā: Tehran, 1984), pp. 17–20. “Akbarī” is an adjective referring to Ibn ‘Arabī, known as the “greatest shaykh,” or *al-shaykh al-akbar*; his teachings became the basis for certain cosmological positions that became increasingly popular in Sufi writings.

¹⁰ *al-Uṣūl al-‘Ashara* (Mawlā), pp. 42–3.

¹¹ Lārī’s attribution of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (which he calls simply “*Futūḥāt*”) to Shaykh Muḥyi al-Dīn removes any ambiguity. Ibn ‘Arabī is *not* mentioned in the second and tenth principles, as well as Lārī’s commentary on the work’s conclusion.

The Shaykh [Kubrā] . . . has written this treatise as an elucidation on the path of the Crafty Ones and, in its meaning, as a commentary upon a word from among the comprehensive words bestowed upon the one who said *I have been given the complete aggregate of words*.¹² He has restored that path to one thing and has referred to that one thing as “death.”¹³

Crafty (*shuṭṭār*) describes the audience that acts upon the path laid out in Kubrā’s treatise — both in the treatise and in Lārī’s commentary — because of that path’s function as an ethical shortcut, a means to draw near to God more quickly and more effectively than those who focus on external acts of worship and those who focus on vigorous inner-exertion.¹⁴ Lārī’s reference to the treatise as a commentary upon a word of the Prophet Muḥammad might refer to a piece of wisdom from the Prophet realized in this treatise or even more specifically to a ḥadīth. Indeed, the treatise is clearly an exegesis of the ḥadīth “Die before you die,” as alluded to in the treatise itself.¹⁵ Although later renounced for the Sufi life, Kubrā’s status as a scholar of ḥadīth lends to the method of this treatise (indeed all he says and does) traditional grounding and perhaps brings Lārī to consider it a commentary not in form but in meaning, associating Kubrā’s treatise with the Prophet’s esoteric knowledge. Yet most telling is the final sentence quoted above. Kubrā’s brilliance lies in reducing the entirety of this path to one thing: death. Ten principal virtues appear as facets of volitional death, as facets of one ethical reality. This lends to the treatise not only structure but, as will be discussed, theoretical profundity.

The renown of Kubrā’s short treatise can be seen in the relatively large number of commentaries, in addition to the two Persian translations mentioned above. A commentary exists in Arabic under the title *‘Arā’is al-Wuṣūl fī Sharḥ al-Uṣūl* by an unnamed

¹² Namely, the Prophet Muḥammad. This ḥadīth can be found in Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Riyadh: Dar al-Mughnī, 1998), Kitāb al-Masājīd, #523, p. 266

¹³ *al-Uṣūl al-‘Ashara* (Mawla), pp. 29–30.

¹⁴ Lārī, like Kubrā himself, shows great concern with the practicality of being able to undertake a prescribed spiritual path. Hence he discusses *murāqaba* (watchfulness) as a shortcut for the wayfarer. See *al-Uṣūl al-‘Ashara* (Mawla), p. 78. The three categories of wayfaring mentioned by Kubrā — *akhyār*, *abrār*, and, the group he advocates, *shuṭṭār* — are discussed by Molé, along with their relationship to the classifications of Sulamī and Ibn ‘Arabī (similar in terms of pattern, different in terms of detail), in “Traités Mineurs de Naḡm al-Dīn Kubrā,” *Annales islamologiques* IV, Cairo, 1963, pp. 1–78, here p. 7.

¹⁵ This ḥadīth, valued by Sufis, does not appear in authoritative Sunni collections. In his *Kashf al-Khafā’*, an adaptation of the famous compilation by al-Sakhāwī (see note 82), Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad al-‘Ajūnī al-Jarāḥī (d. ca. 1162/1749) cites the opinion of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) that the ḥadīth is “unestablished” (*ghayr thābit*); see *Kashf al-Khafā’ wa Muzīl al-Ilbās ‘ammā ishtabara min al-Aḥādīth ‘alā Alsinat al-Nās*, second edition (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1408/1988), vol. 2, #2669, p. 291. See a similar discussion in Badī‘ al-Zamān Furūzānfar, *Aḥādīth-i Mathnawī* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, third edition, 1361 *biḥrī-shamsī*), p. 116. Nevertheless, it is a popular ḥadīth among Sufis. Rāzī cites this ḥadīth at least twice as well as a related ḥadīth: “As you live, so you shall die; and as you die, so you shall be resurrected.” See *The Path of God’s Bondsmen*, pp. 349 and 375, for the first narration, as well as pp. 334 and 344, for the latter.

author who undertook the project because of a request by a certain Muḥyi al-Dīn ibn Nuqtāchī.¹⁶ Marjan Molé mentions two other anonymous commentaries.¹⁷ Another commentary exists in Persian, written by Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan Khwārazmī (d. 839 or 840/1435–6), known more famously even if perhaps mistakenly as Kamāl al-Dīn Khwārazmī, who also authored a commentary on Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and thus stands as a third interpreter of Kubrā’s treatise engaged with the Akbarī contemplative tradition (including Hamadānī and Lārī). As Najīb Māyil-Hirawī has noted, Khwārazmī’s commentary on Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ* is in fact a liberal Persian translation of Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd Qayṣarī’s (d. 751/1350) Arabic commentary, with the addition of Persian poetry and rare references to other texts.¹⁸ Last is the commentary on Kubrā’s text in Ottoman Turkish by a Jilwatī author, Ismā‘īl Ḥaqqī Brūsawī (d. 1137/1725).¹⁹

Volitional Death

Volitional death is that sought-after phenomenon wherein the spiritual wayfarer becomes disrobed of all individual will and submits wholly to the will of the divine. It seems to have been a primary ethical concern for Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Kubrā and his students, judging from the textual legacy of the Kubrāwiyya.²⁰ Paul Ballanfat has

¹⁶ See Māyil-Hirawī’s comments in his introduction to *al-Uṣūl al-‘Ashara* (Mawlā), p. 16. Māyil-Hirawī refers to the text as *‘Arā’is al-Uṣūl*, while Molé refers to it as *‘Arā’is al-Wuṣūl*; see “Traités Mineurs de Naḡm al-Dīn Kubrā,” p. 4.

¹⁷ *Risālat al-Ṭuruq* in Arabic, which expands on the first to the sixth principles (with negligible additions after that), and an incomplete commentary. See “Traités Mineurs de Naḡm al-Dīn Kubrā,” pp. 4–5.

¹⁸ For the discussion of Qayṣarī’s text as the source of Khwārazmī’s commentary, see Māyil-Hirawī’s introduction to *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, ed. Najīb Māyil-Hirawī (Tehran: Mawlā, 1364/1406), vol. 1, 22–6. Māyil-Hirawī also argues that Khwārazmī’s actual title of esteem was not “Kamāl al-Dīn,” but rather “Tāj al-Dīn.” Confusion over a different Ḥusayn Khwārazmī seems to have led to this misattribution, although Māyil-Hirawī does not clarify the source for his conclusion that “Tāj al-Dīn” is the correct *laqab*. This other Ḥusayn Khwārazmī, an important Dhahabī-Kubrawī figure named Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn ibn Shihāb al-Dīn Khwārazmī (d. 958/1551), was — as discussed in detail by Devin DeWeese — the subject of two biographies, one, *Miftāḥ al-Ṭālibīn*, composed in 950/1543–4 by his disciple Jānī Maḥmūd ibn Shaykh ‘Alī ibn ‘Imād al-Dīn Ghijduwānī, and another, written by this Khwārazmī’s son (Sharaf al-Dīn) in 966/1573, entitled *Jaddat al-‘Ashiqīn*. These biographies make clear that “Kamāl al-Dīn” belongs not to our Khwārazmī, whom DeWeese comments is often referred to as “Mawlānā Ḥusayn Khorezmī,” but rather to the later Dhahabī-Kubrawī shaykh. See Māyil-Hirawī’s introduction to Khwārazmī’s *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, vol. 1, p. 15. See also Devin A. DeWeese, *The Kashf al-Hudā of Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Khorezmī: a fifteenth-century Sufi commentary on the Qaṣīdat al-Burdā in Khorezmian Turkic (text edition, translation, and historical introduction)*, Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1985, pp. 63–5; see also “The Eclipse of the Kubrawīyah in Central Asia,” pp. 69–76.

¹⁹ See Algar, “Kobrawiyya i. The Eponym.”

²⁰ Elias discusses Simnānī’s observations concerning volitional (or, as he translates it, voluntary) death, which elaborate upon concepts and terms found in Kubrā’s writings, including the resurrection of the soul and the counterpart to volitional death, namely, compulsory or forced death. See *The Throne*

discussed quite adeptly the essential role occupied by volitional death in the Kubrawiyya, as well as its relationship (when outlined by Kubrā) to the principles of Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 298/910), to other earlier figures, and to major ethical and spiritual themes. Thus, I can focus more exclusively in the coming pages on two fascinating theoretical matters seen by later commentators as implicit in the text: ontology and eschatology.²¹

As Ballanfat indicates, Kubrā's tendency to ground his discussions in scripture, whether the Qur'ān or aḥādīth, can be seen in his choice of ten principles, adding two principles to those of Junayd and thus reflecting the "complete ten" mentioned in the Qur'ān (2:196).²² Similarly, part of the preference for terms indicating volitional death (*al-mawt al-irādī*, in Arabic, and *marg-i ikhti'yārī*, in Persian) must stem from the scriptural legitimacy of this concept. Aside from the often cited ḥadīth mentioned above ("Die before you die"), the theme of constantly remembering one's spiritual state at the point of death can even be inferred from the Qur'ān itself, in Jacob's injunction to his sons "do not die but in a state of submission to God (*islām*)."²³ Even if the centrality of volitional death to Kubrā's prescribed path is striking, allusions and even direct references to volitional death are scattered copiously throughout the prose and poetry of Sufism. Reference to it can be found in the works of many Sufi figures, most prevalently it seems among those in and after the final half of the 7th/13th century, including Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Balkhī/Rūmī (d. 672/1273),²⁴ Sa'īd al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d. 699/1300),²⁵ Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī,²⁶ and Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabistārī (d. ca. 720/1321), the latter of whom describes volitional death as the quality that makes humans unique among creatures:

Carrier of God, pp. 141–144. One can also see the Kubrawī emphasis on volitional death in Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's many references to it in his *Mirṣād al-'ibād*. Indeed, after a lengthy discussion of the ascending grades and stations of the soul, Rāzī describes the most felicitous of all groups as those who have fulfilled the command to "die before you die," those who have undergone volitional death. See *Path of God's Bondsmen*, p. 375.

²¹ See, for example, *La pratique du soufisme*, p. 94, as well as *Les éclosions de la beauté et les parfums de la majesté* (Nîmes: Éditions de l'Éclat, 2001) pp. 54–6 and 63–4.

²² *Les éclosions*, p. 55.

²³ 2:132

²⁴ See, for example, *Mathnawī-i Ma'nawī*, ed. Reynold Nicholson [reprinted] (Tehran: Milād, 1375 *biḥrī-shamsī*), Daftar-i Chahārum, ll. 1096, p. 599. For an example from the *ghazaliyāt*, see *Kulliyāt-i Shams-i Tabrizī*, ed. Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar (Tehran: Šidā-i Mu'āšir, 1386/2007–8), #636, vol. 1, p. 354.

²⁵ See *Mashāriq al-Darārī: sharḥ-i Tā'iyya-i Ibn-i Fāriḍ*, second edition, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Qum: Daftar-i Tabliḡhāt-i Islāmī-i Ḥawzah-i 'Ilmiyya-i Qum, 1379 *biḥrī-shamsī*), p. 264. He of course comments on a reference to death in the poetry of 'Umar ibn 'Alī ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), which, while almost definitely an allusion to the general concept of volition death, does not use terms indicating volition, especially *irādī*.

²⁶ *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī wa Farhangī, 1996), p. 130, for example. As for Ibn 'Arabī himself, a recent study of the concept of death

The world's not endowed with volitional death,
for you alone, out of all the cosmos, possess it.²⁷

Eradicating all worldly and otherworldly attachments is perhaps the singularly most important objective in all of practical Sufism and, since no better metaphor fits this complete and total detachment than death, one can easily understand the validity and frequency of death as a metaphor for subduing the inner-forces that resist absolute submission. Of course, in a treatise such as Kubrā's, death is no mere metaphor; by tying ethical virtues into a concept of death, Kubrā uses the powerful effect of "remembering death" (*dhikr al-mawt*), an important mode of remembrance in Islamic ethics, to awaken the immediacy of remedying the self and the permanence of succeeding or failing to do so.²⁸

Ontological Implications: The Term and Concept of *Wujūd* in Kubrā's Writings

While the word *wujūd* appears only in one principle of Kubrā's text, a phrase that does appear repeatedly is "just as will occur at death" (*kamā huwa bi-l-mawt*). By relating every virtue to death, one reality with two sides, volitional and coerced, Kubrā implicitly gives every virtue two sides. Every virtue, when taken to its terminus, is a quality of death that one chooses to acquire or accepts under compulsion. This means that these virtues are not merely positive qualities, but rather are inevitable ethical realities — they are a post-mortem mode of being.

This pattern found throughout *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara* almost definitely inspired the text's commentators to apply more abstract, cosmological observations, often concerning existence, to Kubrā's short treatise. Thus, for example, elaborating on a saying of Junayd, Kh̲wārazmī observes that reliance (*tawakkul*, the third of Kubrā's principles) anticipates blessings, and the most fundamental blessing is existence (*aṣl-i nīʿam wujūd ast*). Thus, the inner-meaning of reliance is "to become so effaced in the Real that all manifestation is His; just as before your existence He was the sole actor, now you must entrust all works to Him, until, under the ruling of *I become his hearing and sight*, all discretionary action

in Sufi writings by Ibrāhīm Turkī discusses Ibn ʿArabī's presentation of four volitional deaths in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*; see *Falsafat al-Mawt ʿind al-Ṣūfiyya* (Alexandria: Dār al-Wafā' li-Dunyā al-Ṭibā'a wa-l-Nashr, 2003), pp. 188–195.

²⁷ "Golshan-i Rāz," *Majmū'a-i Athār-i Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabistarī*, ed. Ṣamad Muwaḥḥid (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-i Ṭahūrī, 1365/1986), ll. 654, p. 94.

²⁸ Abū Ḥamid Ghazālī, for example, devotes a subchapter to "The Excellence of Remembering Death and Inciting Frequency in its Remembrance" in *Iḥyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, part of a longer chapter on death and the hereafter; see *Iḥyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, introduction by Badawī Ṭabāna (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1957; reprinted in facsimile form in Semarang, undated) vol. 4, pp. 433–437. T.J. Winter has translated the entirety of this chapter; see *The remembrance of death and the afterlife: Book XL of The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (Cambridge, UK: The Islamic Texts Society, 1989).

and decrees are by His activity.”²⁹ It is this teleological approach to ethics — one that takes virtues to their implied ontological conclusion — that results from Kubrā’s simple paradigm.

Of course, the term *wujūd* does also appear directly in Kubrā’s text, in the first principle of his ten principles, “repentance,” even if, as will be discussed, the author’s conception of *wujūd* differs from that of his commentators:

It is obligatory for the seeker to withdraw from all that is sought other than Him, even from *wujūd*, as it has been said: “Your *wujūd* is a sin to which no other sin can be compared.”³⁰

The translator Hamadānī adds after Kubrā’s statement that the seeker should withdraw from his own *wujūd* (which could be translated as existence), “so that he exists through Him” (*tā bidū bast shawad*).³¹ Lārī, as has been mentioned, uses this section to discuss the errors of falsely perceiving one’s own existence as separate from that of the Real, according to “claimants to the Oneness of Being” (*qā’ilān-i waḥdat al-wujūd*).³² Khwārazmī describes the “fetter of existence” to be the greatest of veils, and uses the Prophet Muḥammad as an example of one who transcended his human separative state to reach the level of truly declaring oneness (*tawḥīd*).³³ In illustrating the unity possible for the complete servant, such that his actions become indiscernible from those of the Real, Khwārazmī uses, in this example, a favorite verse of Ibn ‘Arabī: *You did not throw when you threw, but it was God who threw* (8:17).

These commentators seem in part to be reacting to Kubrā’s inclusion of this statement in the *first* principle of his treatise, such that the remainder of his treatise appears framed in a concept of existence: namely, the notion that one must withdraw

²⁹ “Sharḥ al-Uṣūl,” in *Aqrab al-Ṭuruq ilā Allāh*, pp. 103–141, here 111–2. Here Khwārazmī alludes to a *ḥadīth qudsī* valued in classical Sufism, but especially prevalent in the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī and his admirers, which declares that God, once He loves His servant who has approached Him through obligatory followed by supererogatory actions, becomes the “hearing with which he [the servant] hears, the sight with which he sees, the hand with which he seizes, and the foot with which he walks.” The *ḥadīth* is often used to describe *shubūd* as an experiencing of the Oneness of Being. For this *ḥadīth*, see al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl (d. 256/870), *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Damascus and Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1423/2002), narrated by Abū Hurayra, Kitāb al-Riqāq, #6502, p. 1617.

³⁰ Usually unattributed (as here), sometimes attributed to the legendary early female saint Rābi‘a (perhaps because of its tone), this saying seems to derive from an erotic poem: *wa qultu fa-mā adhnabtu, qālat mujība / wujūduka dhanb lā yuqās bibi dhanb* (“I said to her, ‘What sin have I committed?’ She said in reply / ‘Your existence is a sin to which no sin can be compared’”). See, as one example in which the entire *bayt* is cited, Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan Khwārazmī (the Kubrawī commentator mentioned above), ed. Najīb Māyil-Hirawī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (Tehran: Mawlā, 1368 *hijrī-shamsī*), vol. 1, p. 308. I have not been able to locate it in any *diwān*.

³¹ *Aqrab al-Ṭuruq ilā Allāh*, p. 91.

³² *al-Uṣūl al-‘Ashara*, p. 42.

³³ *Aqrab al-Ṭuruq ilā Allāh*, pp. 155–7.

from one's existence (or one's false notion of separative existence). Clearly, the pattern of withdrawing from selfhood willingly, found in each of the ten principles, encourages this interpretation.

Moreover, Kubrā's comments on the benefits of the *dhikr* "there is no deity but God" further seem to intimate an ontological interpretation of volitional death. Kubrā tells his audience that, once the heart has been purified through remembrance, "the spirit shines forth through the evidences of the Real and the self-disclosure of His essence and attributes: *and the earth will gleam by the light of its Lord* (39:69)." The first part of this formulaic phrase, *lā ilāha* ("there is no deity"), serves to cleanse the seeker of the attributes of selfhood, ridding him or her of spiritual sicknesses, fetters, and attachments. Through the affirmation, *illā Allāh* ("but God"), the heart is rid of all distortions in its essential temperament and, relevant to our discussion, lives through the light of God. Kubrā attributes one light to the remembrance itself and another to God; the first becomes a source of purity for the heart, while the second — the light of God — becomes a source of life. Kubrā then presents his disciples with the concept of *tajallin* (manifestation, illumination, or self-disclosure), which Kubrā explains through an esoteric use of two Qur'ānic verses, one of which is 39:69 cited above. The Real has disclosed His own essence and attributes to the spirit and has illuminated all of the wayfarer's inner dimensions, such that the spirit, heart, and self-soul have taken on a new appearance, what might be called newer forms of being, where they indeed glow on account of the divine light. A resurrection has taken place for the self-soul (*naḥs*), which, like the post-resurrection earth, now testifies to its creator's presence via the absence of distorting other lights.³⁴

Yet the use of terms such as "existence" or "manifestation" might too easily lead to a conflation of worldviews, especially for readers familiar with (or, in the case of Kubrā's commentators, immersed in) Akbarī cosmology, that is, cosmology derived from the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī and his interpreters. Indeed, Akbarī thought has a striking ability to find itself within texts external and unrelated to its vision, Sufi and non-Sufi alike, from erotic poetry, to the sources of revelation, to treatises such as that by Kubrā.³⁵ Even translating *wujūd* as "existence" presupposes that this term carries primarily its well-known philosophical meaning, when such is not the case in many Sufi texts.

³⁴ Toshihiko Izutsu discusses the complex relationship found in Kubrā's writings between the self-soul (*naḥs*), spirit (*rūḥ*), and secret (*sirr*), which together allow the true self — the "Theophanic Ego" as Izutsu calls it — to reveal itself in the darkness of human existence. See his article "The Theophanic Ego in Sufism: An Analysis of the Sufi Psychology of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā," *Sophia Perennis*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1978), pp. 23–42, here especially pp. 29–38. Meier also presents an overview of the hierarchy and interactions of human spiritual components and faculties in *Die Fawā'id al-Ġamāl wa-Fawā'id al-Ġalāl des Naḥm ad-Dīn Kubrā* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1957), pp. 168–194.

³⁵ I discuss this in *Sufi Aesthetics: Beauty, Love, and the Human Form in Ibn 'Arabi and 'Iraqi* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), pp. 5–8 and 103–5. The Akbarī tendency to engulf other modes of discourse merits more attention.

For Abū 'Alī ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), *wujūd* was a self-evident concept, categorized as necessary (*wājib*), contingent (*mumkin*), and impossible (*mumtani'*). This philosophical use of the word *wujūd* can be translated — along with another term found in Ibn Sīnā's writings, *annīyya* — as “existence.”³⁶ More specifically, Ibn Sīnā's description of the Necessary Existent as inherently self-loving, a source of love for all contingent existents, existing without cause while all else exists or fails to exist through a cause, found a receptive audience in the Muslim world, including those Sufis unopposed or desensitized to philosophical language who discerned esoteric significance in these categories (which is not to imply that Ibn Sīnā himself was at all unaware of its esoteric significance).³⁷ In the writings of Ibn 'Arabī, the philosophical terms of Ibn Sīnā do more than simply appear; rather, they allow Ibn 'Arabī to convey — in familiar philosophical terms — a cosmology in which creation and Creator lack clear lines of distinction (other than the transcendent divine essence). Using Ibn Sīnā's concepts and language, Ibn 'Arabī often reminds his audience that, while the Real is the Necessary Existent “by essence,” the contingent existents in creation are also necessary existents “by other.”³⁸ In the case of Ibn 'Arabī this means that the fully achieved servant *realizes* and *witnesses* that creation shares in the necessity of the Necessary Existent, since He is the originator, maintainer, real actor, and ongoing source for all things.³⁹ “When the tasting of the

³⁶ Of course, Ibn Sīnā himself refers to the multi-functionality of the term: “The word *wujūd* also signifies *many meanings*, including ‘the reality of a thing as it is,’ which is like saying *wujūd* means the existence specific to a thing.” See Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifā' — al-Ilāhiyyāt*, ed. Sa'īd Zā'id and al-Ab Qanawātī (Qum: Maktabat Āyatallāh al-Mar'ashī al-Najafī, 1404 AH), p. 31. For a more detailed discussion of the word *wujūd* in Ibn Sīnā's writing see Parviz Morewedge, “Philosophical Analysis and Ibn Sīnā's ‘Essence-Existence’ Distinction,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 92, No. 3 (Jul.–Sep., 1972), pp. 425–435.

³⁷ The descriptions of the Necessary Being come, in part, from quotations from Ibn Sīnā's *Najāt* to be found in Parviz Morewedge, “The Logic of Emanationism and Šūfism in the Philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Part I,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 91, No. 4 (Oct.–Dec., 1971), pp. 467–476, here p. 470. Also, specifically for the point made that a contingent existent needs a cause (*'illa*) for both its existence and failure to exist, see *al-Shifā' — al-Ilāhiyyāt*, p. 38. For a discussion of Ibn 'Arabī's relationship to philosophers and philosophical terms see Franz Rosenthal, “Ibn 'Arabī between ‘Philosophy’ and ‘Mysticism’: ‘Šūfism and Philosophy Are Neighbors and Visit Each Other’ (*fa-inna at-taṣawwuf wa-t-tafalsuf yatajāwarāni wa-yatazāwarāni*),” *Oriens*, vol. 31 (1988), pp. 1–35. For a discussion of words meaning “to be” in Arabic, see Fadlou Shehadi, “Arabic and ‘To Be,’ ” *The Verb “Be” and Its Synonyms*, ed. John W. M. Verhaar (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1969), Part Four, pp. 112–125.

³⁸ *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Beirut: Dār Šādir, 1968), vol. 3, p. 403 (Chapter 364, Waṣl 21).

³⁹ Ibn 'Arabī explains this in the passage immediately prior to that which was quoted. It should be noted that the context of his discussion is the debate about human actions, whether they are created by God and acquired by humans or created by humans themselves. Ibn 'Arabī proposes that all actions can be attributed to God (and will be attributed to Him, once the veil is removed upon death), even those that are seemingly morally repugnant, since such judgments are relational and disconnected from the absolute goodness of all things.

servant becomes such witnessing,”⁴⁰ states Ibn ‘Arabī, “the Real shows him that the essence of that [vision] which burdened him was none other than God, one in terms of existence and named ‘creation’ under the influence of that essence’s status as contingent.”⁴¹ Ibn ‘Arabī’s application of visionary experience to conceptions of existence led to an unofficial school of thought (the “claimants to the Oneness of Being” referred to by Lārī) that dominated Sufi cosmological writings after him including those of Kubrā’s commentators. Still, it should be mentioned that *wujūd* in the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī sometimes also carries the technical Sufi meaning of “finding” or “ecstatic finding.”⁴²

Yet, in Kubrā’s writings, human *wujūd* and divine *wujūd* are not one, nor can either be equated with the philosophical concept of “existence” as one self-evident thing.⁴³ (Of course, I mean his most common usage, since he does not use the term in one way in all instances.)⁴⁴ Rather, Kubrā often intends *wujūd* to mean existence in the sense of

⁴⁰ The witnessing to which Ibn ‘Arabī refers is “seeing the Real in creation,” from the perspective of the relationship between the Necessary Existent *by essence*, namely the Real, and the Necessary Existent *by other*, namely the cosmos.

⁴¹ *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, vol. 3, pp. 403–4.

⁴² See for example *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, vol. 1, p. 99 (Chapter 4), where a discussion of *wujūd al-qalb* appears. An example of *wujūd* in its technical Sufi sense can be found in *al-Risāla* by Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), in a section on the terminology of the Sufis. Here *wujūd* is included as part of a tripartite set of terms: *al-tawājud* (exertion seeking ecstasy), *al-wajd* (ecstasy), and *al-wujūd* (ecstatic finding). Clearly, al-Qushayrī’s terms describe experiential divisions, beginning with exertion and ending in finding, with ecstasy as a means to finding. While ecstasy (*wajd*) is “that which your heart encounters and comes to you without deliberateness or constraint,” ecstatic finding (*wujūd*) comes “after one’s ascension from ecstasy — there is no finding of the Real except after the extinction of humanity, since there is no remaining for humanity when the Sultan of Reality becomes manifest.” The servant’s absence is a key part of such *wujūd*. Related observations appear in the *Kashf al-Mahjūb* of ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān al-Jullābī Hujwīrī (d. ca 465/1071–72), who contrasts *wajd* as estranged sadness with *wujūd* as finding or attainment and places both in the context of *samā’*. See *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya fī ‘Ilm al-Taṣawwuf*, ed. Ma’rūf Zurayq and ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Baḷṭa-jī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1990), p. 62–3. See also *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, ed. Valentin A. Zhukovskii, introduction by Qāsim Anṣārī, 10th edition (Tehran: Tahūrī, 2008), pp. 538–541.

⁴³ Kubrā’s use of *wujūd* does not engage or respond to other usages — it is undefined and assumes a distinction between man’s and God’s existence. However, a later Kubrawī, ‘Alā’ al-Dawla al-Simnānī, explicitly disagreed with certain assertions made by Ibn ‘Arabī and his followers concerning existence, especially ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī or al-Kāshānī (730/1329), with whom he corresponded directly. Simnānī’s insistence on the distinction between God’s absolutely necessary existence as separate from human contingent existence contradicts Ibn ‘Arabī’s view that contingency is ultimately illusory. See Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God*, pp. 97–8. In this regard, see also H. Landolt’s “Der Briefwechsel zwischen Kāshānī und Simnānī über Waḥdat al-Wuḡūd,” *Der Islam*, 50 (1973), pp. 29–81, as cited by Elias.

⁴⁴ There are times that *wujūd* seems to carry its philosophical sense in the writings of Kubrā; the introduction to his *Risalat al-Sā’ir al-Ḥā’ir al-Wājid ilā al-Sātir al-Wāḥid al-Mājid*, a Persian text written by Kubrā for students less able to understand a similar Arabic treatise, describes God as having brought creation from nothingness (*‘adam*) to existence (*bi-wujūd*). See “Traités Mineurs,” pp. 11 and 39. This assumes, of course, that another author did not append the introduction to Kubrā’s treatise.

“being there,” as used in a poem cited in the influential *al-Risāla* by Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), a text studied by Kubrā under the guidance of Muḥammad ibn Abī Sulaymān ibn Yūsuf Hamadānī:

My ecstatic finding (*wujūdī*) is to be absent from *al-wujūd*
because of that which appears to me from witnessing.⁴⁵

Here the poet seems to play on dual meanings of the word *wujūd* — the technical Sufi meaning of “ecstatic finding” and “existence,” but existence in a less universal sense, something closer to “being there,” a counterpart to absence.⁴⁶ As an extension of such usage, usage common to Kubrā’s writings, Kubrā uses *wujūd* to mean “human existence,” or “human presence,” or even “physicality.”⁴⁷

The difference between *al-wujūd*, the self (*al-naḥs*), and Satan (*al-shayṭān*) at the station of witnessing is that: *al-wujūd* is at first an intense darkness; when it becomes a little more pure, your front side takes the form of black clouds.⁴⁸

The reference to darkness, associated with materiality in classical Islamic cosmology, tells us that by *wujūd* Kubrā’s means “physicality.”⁴⁹ In his vision of things as described in *Fawā’ih al-Jamāl wa Fawātiḥ al-Jalāl*, divine and spiritual matters are covered by physicality, and, in a pattern similar to that offered by his pupil Abu Bakr ‘Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad Najm al-Dīn Dāya Rāzī (d. 654/1256) in *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād* at great lengths, those layers are removed by *dhikr* and other spiritual exercises, which results in insight.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, p. 63. William Chittick discusses this alternate meaning of *wujūd*, as well as this couplet, in “Waḥdat al-Shuhūd,” *EF*, vol. 11, pp. 37–9, especially p. 38. For the reference to Kubrā’s studies, see “Kobrawiyya i. The Eponym.”

⁴⁶ In Kubrā’s case, for example, he can speak of the wayfarer’s becoming “absent from his *wujūd*” (*fa-idhā ghāba al-sayyār ‘an wujūdihī*). See *Fawā’ih al-Jamāl wa Fawātiḥ al-Jalāl*, ed. Yūsuf Zaydān (Cairo: Dār Su’ād al-Ṣabāḥ, 1993), p. 139.

⁴⁷ Thus bringing Paul Ballanfat to translate *wujūd* sometimes as “le corps” and sometimes as “l’existence” in his translation of *Fawā’ih al-Jamāl wa Fawātiḥ al-Jalāl*, namely, *Les éclosions de la beauté et les parfums de la majesté*, pp. 131–2. Concerning *wujūd* as human physicality, Ballanfat’s conclusion parallels that discussed here: “Le mot employé par Najm-al-dīn Kubrā est *wujūd* qui, chez lui, désigné à la fois le corps et l’existence. C’est en tant que corporelle que l’existence constitue un voile pour l’homme. Elle est à ce stade métaphorique et l’homme est appelé à regagner sa véritable existence, laquelle n’appartient qu’à Dieu et dépasse l’être créé, par le ravissement divin qui attire la lumière du cœur du mystique vers le haut, jusqu’à s’unir avec la lumière descendante du trône.”

⁴⁸ *Fawā’ih al-Jamāl wa Fawātiḥ al-Jalāl*, p. 125.

⁴⁹ Fritz Meier sees Kubrā’s use of *wujūd* as indicating two sorts of existence, individual and universal, and thus translatable as “existence” or “being,” although Meier is careful to relate individual existence to physicality. See *Die Fawā’ih*, p. 70.

⁵⁰ This is, generally, the focus of the third part of Rāzī’s book, particularly its twelfth chapter “Concerning the Need for Dhikr and the Special Properties of the Dhikr of *lā ilāha illā Allāh*.” See *The Path of God’s Bondsmen*, pp. 268–270. ‘Alā’ al-Dawla al-Simnānī also stands as a continuation, in many respects, of Kubrā’s understanding of remembrance (*dhikr*) and its effect on human physicality. In his *Risāla-i Nūriyya*, Simnānī describes *dhikr* as a fire that uses the physical body as fuel “until it becomes ignited

In Kubrā's words, "people are in blindness except those for whom God removes the veil, and the veil is not something external to them; rather, it is from them; it is the darkness of their *wujūd*."⁵¹ After such insight, the seeker still lives within that "physicality" (*wujūd*) but now enlightened and absent from it. Such can be seen in his description of true bestirrings (*al-khawāṭir al-ḥaqqāniyya*), which in fact correspond to knowledge inspired in the heart pre-eternally⁵²:

Knowledge is veiled by the darkness of *al-wujūd*. Thus, when the traveler grows pure and absent from *al-wujūd*, divine-direct knowledge appears — or an ordinance from His ordinances. Then, the traveler returns to *al-wujūd*, knowledge accompanying him, which is inspiration.⁵³

The darkness of *al-wujūd* is directly related to matter and the elements, with the densest matter as the lowest level of *al-wujūd* and the most luminescent matter as the highest — again, as one would expect in classical Islamic cosmology:

Know that *wujūd* is not one thing. Every *wujūd* has above it another *wujūd* that is more exclusive and more excellent, until it reaches its terminus with the *wujūd* of the Real. Moreover, within every *wujūd* on the path (*al-ṭarīq*) there is a water-pit.⁵⁴

Again, that *wujūd* is not one thing tells us that it is separate from the philosophical term "existence." Moreover, these grades and levels, while in one way relating to physicality, also relate to realization: the wayfarer traverses seven types of *wujūd* within himself or

and that turbid curtain is transformed to dark blue," such that "as the fire becomes stronger and the firewood of existence is dried of the moisture of [remaining] morsels of sensual delight (*nadawāt-i luqmāt-i ḥuṣūṣī*), the colors become purer and the smoke is decreased," so that the "difference between the colors red, white, blue, yellow, black and green in this stage is the result of the strength of the fire of recollection." See Jamal J. Elias, "A Kubrawī Treatise on Mystical Visions: The *Risāla-yi Nūriyya* of 'Alā' ad-Dawla as-Simnānī," *The Muslim World*, vol. 83, no. 1 (1993), pp. 68–80, here p. 72. Elias has also made the text of *Risāla-yi Nūriyya* available in edited form; see "Risāla-yi Nūriyya-yi 'Alā' al-Dawla-yi Simnānī," ed. with introduction by Jamal J. Elias, *Ma'ārif*, vol. 13, serial no. 37 (1375/1996), pp. 3–26.

⁵¹ *Fawā'id al-Jamāl wa Fawā'id al-Jalāl*, p. 122.

⁵² Kubrā describes these desired bestirrings that enter the heart as "beginningless knowledge (*ilm azalī*) that God taught the spirits when He spoke to them — *Am I not your Lord, they said 'yes'* (7:172) . . . and God taught Adam the names, all of them (2:31), so they [the spirits] learned in such a way, and such spirits now teach this direct-divine knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ladunnī*).⁵³ *Fawā'id al-Jamāl wa Fawā'id al-Jalāl*, p. 138.

⁵³ *Fawā'id al-Jamāl wa Fawā'id al-Jalāl*, p. 138.

⁵⁴ *Fawā'id al-Jamāl wa Fawā'id al-Jalāl* (henceforth FJFJ), p. 134. Ballanfāt's dual use of "body" and "existence" for *wujūd* means that his interpretation of this passage differs significantly from that offered here: "Sache que le corps n'est pas une chose unique. Il n'existe pas de corps sans que se trouve au-dessus de lui un autre corps plus digne et meilleur que lui, et ainsi de suite jusqu'à ce que tu arrives finalement à l'existence de Dieu." See *Les éclosions de la beauté et les parfums de la majesté*, p. 138. For the "water-pit" or "well" experienced by the wayfarer as a dark covering see "The Theophanic Ego," p. 34.

herself, just as there are seven levels of earth or sky.⁵⁵ As the wayfarer encounters higher and purer levels of *wujūd*, he beholds colors less affected by darkness.⁵⁶ Clearly, the *wujūd* of the individual human mirrors that of the cosmos as a whole: Just as there are four basic elements in the cosmos, classical Islamic medicine followed the Greek model in agreeing that the microcosm — the human body — also has four elements. Kubrā holds that these four elements, these four basic levels of human material being, bring the self-soul to associate itself with such being as opposed to an awareness of God's presence, hence forgetfulness.⁵⁷ Thus, human self-awareness is a product of bodily existence. One who sheds such self-awareness shares in divine self-awareness, that is, divine *wujūd*. It is for that reason, namely that *wujūd* is a state of human presence, that recollection (*dhikr*), unfetters the wayfarer from *wujūd*, as discussed by Gerhard Böwering.⁵⁸

One can see, then, that there are connections between the classical Sufi sense of *wujūd* as “ecstatic finding” and Kubrā's notion of *wujūd* as “being there,” since it is through vanquishing the physically-aware self that one best loses one's own self-awareness and becomes absorbed in the divine “*wujūd*,” that is, the divine self-awareness made manifest as human awareness of the divine. In *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara*, Kubrā describes this as “the remembered . . . standing in as a vicegerent for the one who remembers,” such that “when you seek the one who remembers, you find the one remembered, and when you seek the one remembered, you find the one who remembers.” Moreover, since *volitional death* allows, more than any other path, the eradication of self-*wujūd*-awareness, in many ways not only *Fawāʾiḥ al-Jamāl wa Fawāʾiḥ al-Jalāl* but also *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara* must be considered a treatise that takes *wujūd* as a major theme, although implicitly and in a sense peculiar to Kubrā.⁵⁹ Indeed,

⁵⁵ FJFJ, pp. 134–5.

⁵⁶ *Die Fawāʾiḥ*, p. 211.

⁵⁷ “*Al-wujūd* is composed of four elements, all of which are *shades of darkness*, one covering the other (Qurʾan 24:40): earth, water, fire, and air. You are beneath them all, with no craving for separation from them except by giving each entitled entity its due: This is the rendering of the part to the whole, such that earthliness (*al-turābiyya*) takes the earth, wateriness (*al-māʾiyya*) takes the water, fieriness (*al-nāriyya*) takes the fire, and airiness (*al-hawāʾiyya*) takes the air. When each has taken its share, you become separated from these burdens.” Kubrā's remedy, disassociating oneself from the very attributes of these four elements, is intrinsically related to volitional death. FJFJ, p. 128.

⁵⁸ Böwering comments, “Existence and its associates are counteracted by recollection, the mystic's prayer par excellence. Recollection, for Kubra, is not the mere recital of a formula recalling God's presence to mind. It actually renders present what it enunciates — the very presence of God in the mystic.” See “Mystical Circles and Colors in Kubra's Philosophical Kaleidoscope,” *Beyond Conventional Constructs: Essays in Honour of Professor Dr. C. A. Qadir*, ed. Ghazala Irfan (Lahore: Qadir Presentation Committee, 1987), pp. 82–101, here p. 86.

⁵⁹ *Fawāʾiḥ al-Jamāl* is also, like *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara*, concerned with volitional death, especially in its practical facet, namely, vanquishing the self through ascetic practices coupled with awareness of their theoretical framework. Kubrā's emphasis on this method is noticeable from the outset, in his prescription to limit food intake gradually, to abandon will and resign oneself to the will of a

this implicit connection between *wujūd* and volitional death is made explicit in *Fawā'ih al-Jamāl wa Fawātiḥ al-Jalāl*:

Know, my dear, that you will not be free of the four *wujūds* — namely, that of earth, water, fire, and air — except through the final, major death. Through *this* death, however, some of them will vanish from you, so that you will witness with your eyesight that which you once knew with your intellect.⁶⁰

It is death that frees the wayfarer from *wujūd*, and while complete freedom rests only in final death, volitional death can yield enough disassociation from human *wujūd* to awaken divine-direct knowledge and the ten core ethical principles outlined in *al-Uṣūl al-'Ashara*.

Eschatological Implications: Chosen Versus Forced Submission

Kubrā's system not only puts forward an indistinct yet evocative system concerned with *wujūd*, it also suggests an esoteric explanation of the system of divine reward and punishment. While Kubrā explicitly in *al-Uṣūl al-'Ashara* associates the self's receptiveness toward God with mercy and an avoidance of torment,⁶¹ any eschatology derived from *al-Uṣūl al-'Ashara* is mostly a function of its structure; indeed its theoretical function, unlike *Fawā'ih al-Jamāl* mentioned above, is less in exposition than in structure. Throughout Kubrā's treatise, a distinction is made between force and choice. Certainly, for those souls that do not surrender utterly to these ten principles of selflessness, death has a dramatic consequence. Death forces the self-soul to submit in an absolute sense. Thus, since submission allows for a manifestation of the divine traits, death forces the self-soul to manifest God's attributes, wrenching it into a distorted mirror for the divine traits, not those of beauty but rather those of divine power or wrath.

Hamadānī sees this distinction between force and choice and the implication it has in terms of reward and punishment. In his translation, he brings out, as he has in other instances, what Kubrā has perhaps implied. Kubrā's explanation of the third principle,

trustworthy shaykh, to become thereby “such as an infant or boy who has not yet reached the age of puberty or as a fool who has squandered all his wealth,” in other words, to find oneself in need of a caretaker, all the while clarifying the spiritual and even cosmological dimensions of such action. FJFJ, p. 123.

⁶⁰ FJFJ, p. 130.

⁶¹ See his discussion of the ninth principle, where he defines *al-murāqaba*: “Watchfulness . . . is to be immersed in the sea of love-longing for Him, and it is yearning to meet Him. The [wayfarer]’s heart craves tenderly for Him; his spirit groans plaintively to Him; he seeks aid of Him against Him; and he seeks succor from Him toward Him. All this, until God opens the door of His mercy, mercy which none can restrain, and He shuts the door of his torment, which no key can open, by means of a brilliant light that comes from the mercy of God upon the self. Then such darkness of the self’s propensity to command to evil vanishes in an instant, the likes of which does not vanish after thirty years of inner-combative exertions and ascetic practices. . . .”

reliance on God (*al-tawakkul*), for example, does not approach the topic of divine retribution at all: “to withdraw from secondary causes (*al-asbāb*) and from cause-and-effect (*al-tasabbub*) altogether, trusting in God instead, just as such will occur at death.” It seems, rather, that Hamadānī’s expansion is in response to the very system that Kubrā has laid out throughout the text, again, force and choice in manifesting God’s attributes, as can be seen in Hamadānī’s addition to Kubrā’s definition:

A withdrawal that the servant chooses relies on God’s generosity (*karam*), which causes the divine pleasure, and the forced withdrawal that comes after death will be an intimate companion to the divine punishment, displeasure, and wrath — we seek refuge in God from it!⁶²

Not only does Hamadānī assert that the self’s willingness to submit directly causes the pleasures and pains of the afterlife, but his doing so in a commentary also conveys that such is, in his opinion, implied in Kubrā’s text.

Perhaps more directly related to Kubrā’s comments is the reaction seen in the commentaries to Kubrā’s definition of *ṣabr* (patience). Kubrā defines patience in terms involving willed torment:

The eighth of these principles is patience, which means to withdraw from the self’s allotments, through striving and suffering, just as is the case with death. It is firmness in weaning the self from that to which it has grown accustomed and that which it loves, for the sake of edifying it and extinguishing its desires, to such an extent that it stands upright on the exemplary path for purifying the heart and polishing the spirit.

Suffering inheres in the wayfarer’s meeting the Lord ruling over him and possessing all perfection. One either suffers volitionally in this life, thus undergoing the purification necessary for this meeting, or is compelled to suffer, and is thus forcibly purified, after death. Such connections between purity, suffering, and torment either before or after death become even clearer in Hamadānī’s translation-commentary:

If the wayfarer does not acquire purification for the commanding self in the crucible of exertion, then, after death, various hues of torment must be borne in the crucible of hellfire — by force.⁶³

Exertion (*mujābada*) in this life and hellfire (*dūzakb*) in the next life serve parallel purposes, both readjusting the self-soul for one reality; it is not the reality that undergoes change in order to reward or punish, but rather the self’s readiness to receive that reality. “Therefore,” continues Hamadānī, “to endure the toil of worshipful acts, to have patience in cutting off the self from familiar things and beloved things — which

⁶² *Aqrab al-Ṭuruq ilā Allāh*, p. 93. If *muqarrab* is read *muqarrib*, then this sentence would read “. . . and the forced withdrawal that comes after death brings near the divine punishment. . . .”

⁶³ *Aqrab al-Ṭuruq ilā Allāh*, p. 97.

cleanses the heart and purifies the spirit — is better than to have patience in the face of eternal punishment.”⁶⁴ This sentiment is echoed almost word-for-word in the translation-commentary of Kh^wārazmī (so similar are the two, in fact, that Kh^wārazmī must have been familiar with Hamadānī’s version), who asserts that “every mirror must burn in the various hues of the fire’s torment, which is a phrase signifying separation from one’s Lord.”⁶⁵

These essential connections, where chosen surrender brings divine pleasure (linked often in the Qur’ān to paradise and the final reward),⁶⁶ and where forced surrender brings divine punishment or wrath, present the human self as its *own* source of reward or punishment. It is the state of the self at death that determines whether it receives reward or punishment; this state, moreover, depends on the self’s ability to submit to a divine reality, to the reality that God has all good traits and the self has none, to the reality of selflessness. This reality will pour forth onto the self at the moment of death, and the self either has accepted this in advance or must be forced to accept it.

The self’s choice to surrender before death only affects the *quality* with which self acquiesces to spirit allowing the divine traits to be reflected. Such surrender does not affect the inevitability of the reflection of divine traits, since death — one must bear in mind — ultimately forces the recalcitrant self-soul to adopt an antithetical form of each of the ten principles mentioned by Kubrā. If the self has not, for example, chosen *zuhd* or a renunciation of the pleasures of this world, then such a renunciation will be forced on the self at death. Kubrā’s presentation of the self’s choice between submission and rebellion and its implied effects at the moment of death as interpreted by Hamadānī has important parallels in the explanation of death offered by Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), although similarities between these writings need not result from any historical link.⁶⁷ In fact, any sensitive reader of the Qur’ān will notice that it often

⁶⁴ *Aqrab al-Ṭuruq ilā Allāh*, p. 97–8.

⁶⁵ *Aqrab al-Ṭuruq ilā Allāh*, p. 126. Lārī only alludes to the afterlife in his discussion of patience to mention a statement of the “shaykh” (almost definitely Ibn ‘Arabī, whom Lārī usually refers to as “Shaykh Muḥyi al-Dīn”) that “the station of patience ends with the heavenly ones being situated in Paradise and the hellish ones being situated in Hellfire.” See *al-Uṣūl al-‘Ashara*, p.74.

⁶⁶ E.g., 98:8 and 89:27–30.

⁶⁷ Ghazālī’s description of the afterlife as an externalization of the soul’s interior appears especially clearly in his *Kimīyā-i Sa’ādat*, where he asserts that the monstrous snakes seen by disbelievers during the punishment of the grave emanate from the soul and from the disbeliever’s own attributes, since “in reality every person takes the means of his own punishment with him from here, which lie within him.” More relevant, Ghazālī outlines three types of “spiritual hell” (*dūzakḥ-i rūḥānī*, as opposed to the physical torments of the resurrected body): first, the “fire of separation from the desires of this world,” second, the “fire of shame, being singled out, embarrassments, and dishonors,” and, third, the “fire of being debarred from the beauty of the divine presence and losing hope of it.” In his descriptions, much like those of Kubrā’s commentators, torment and pleasure equal varying degrees of readiness for the soul’s encounter with spiritual realities after death. See *Kimīyā-i Sa’ādat*, ed. Ḥusayn Khadīvjām (Tehran: Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i Ilmī wa Farhangī, 1382 *hijrī-shamsī*), pp. 95–6 and 102.

describes the condemned sinner in ironic terms as a person who has now recognized his submissive position, albeit forcefully and painfully, vis-à-vis God.⁶⁸

Kubrā's way, then, provides wayfarers with a shortcut to God by revealing a pattern behind the noblest ethical qualities, a pattern most congruent with what he implies to be the true cosmological position of human beings. The spirit's polishing, the self's cleansing, indeed all spiritual perfection lies not in acquiring attributes — Kubrā's way suggests — but negating, losing, and shedding *wujūd*. Death, a realization of nothingness or human absence, when willed, encompasses all virtues and indeed is the innermost kernel of virtue itself. Whether willed or not, however, death allows for the emergence of a hidden reality unknown otherwise, namely, encountering one's Lord.

Discussion of Text and Manuscripts

In the translation below, I have favored Molé's edition of *al-Uṣūl al-'Ashara* as published in his "Traité Mineurs de Nağm al-Dīn Kubrā," pages 15–22. Molé has made use of 15 manuscripts, which, aside from the introductory eulogies, tend to vary minimally. Māyil-Hirawī's edition of the text, which aims more to reflect the text as it existed for Lārī, makes use of two manuscripts that include Lārī's commentary; Paul Ballanfat makes use of this edition for his recent French translation.⁶⁹ In general there is little variation. Those instances in which I have preferred Māyil-Hirawī's edition or alternatives available in the manuscripts cited by Molé are indicated in the footnotes.

Appendix

Translation: "The Ten Principles"

[The Introduction]

In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Beneficent.

Praise be to the One who has guided us to where we are, and had He not guided us, we would never have been guided aright. May blessings and peace be upon Muḥammad, guide to the path of rightness, and upon his family and companions, wayfarers on the course of integrity.

Said the Knowledgeable Shaykh, the Model for the Verifiers, Najm al-Dīn Abū al-Jannāb Aḥmad ibn 'Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Ṣufī, well-known as Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, may God, the Exalted, sanctify his innermost heart:

The paths to God, the Exalted, are as many as the breaths of His creatures.

⁶⁸ E.g., 6:23, 6:30, 7:38, 7:44, 7:53, 16:86, 20:125, 23:106-7, 32:12, 33:67-8, 35:37, 39:71, 41:29, 44:12, and 46:34.

⁶⁹ *La pratique du soufisme: quatorze petits traités*, pp. 139–146.

Yet our path, which we will now begin to explain, is the most proximate of paths to God, the Exalted, the most lucid and the most rightly-guided. This is because the paths, despite their abundance, can be divided into three major groups. {p.16}

The first of them is the path of the lords of worshipful labors (*arbāb al-mu'āmalāt*), laboring with frequency in fasting, praying of the ritual prayer, reciting of the Qur'ān, partaking in Ḥajj and Jihād, and anything other than these of the outward acts. This is the path of the Choice Ones (*al-akhyār*), for those who reach the ultimate attainment on this path as time stretches out are fewer than the few.

The second of these paths is that of the masters of inner-combative exertions (*al-mujābadāt*) and ascetic practices (*al-riyādāt*) in improving character traits, purifying the self, cleansing the heart, polishing the spirit and putting forth effort in their cultivation of the inner. This is the path of the Pious Ones (*al-abrār*), for those who reach the ultimate attainment on this path are greater in number than that party mentioned.⁷⁰ Still, however, attainment for such is a rarity, as seen when [Ḥusayn] ibn Maṣṣūr asked Ibrāhīm al-Khawāṣṣ, “At what station are you subduing your *nafs* (self-soul)?”

He answered, “I have been subduing my *nafs* at the Station of Reliance on God (*tawakkul*) for thirty years.”

Thereupon [Ibn Maṣṣūr] said: “You have annihilated your life in the cultivation of the inner, yet what have you achieved in terms of annihilation in God?”⁷¹

The third of these paths is that of the wayfarers to God, those who fly by means of Him. It is the path of the Crafty Ones (*al-sbuṭṭār*) from among the people of love, the path of those travelers pulled by the force of divine gravitation, for those who reach attainment in this path at the beginning are greater in number than those in the other paths who reach attainment by the end.

This preferred path is constructed upon death by volition. Said the Prophet, may peace be upon him: “Die before you die.”⁷² And it is contained in ten principles.

[The First Principle: Concerning Repentance (al-Tawba)]

The first of those principles is repentance, which is a return to God, the Exalted, by choice, just as death is a return without choice, as He — the Exalted — says *Return to*

⁷⁰ Hence they are righteous, but not as rare as the first group.

⁷¹ See Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's parallel citation of this incident. Commenting on this interaction between Ḥusayn ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922) and al-Khawwāṣṣ, Hamid Algar remarks that al-Khawwāṣṣ (d. 291/904) was “an early Sufi noted for his exacting practice of reliance on God (*tawakkul*) on solitary journeys through the desert.” See *The Path of God's Bondsmen: From Origin to Return*, tr. Hamid Algar (Islamic Publications International, North Haledon, New Jersey, 1980), p. 213. For references to al-Khawwāṣṣ, Algar refers the reader to Benedikt Reinert's *Die Lehre vom tawakkul in der klassischen Sufik* (Berlin, 1968), particularly pp. 167–170 and 200–203, also tracing the origin of this meeting between al-Ḥallāj and al-Khawwāṣṣ to 'Alī ibn 'Uthmān Hujwiri's (d. 465–469/1072–1077) *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (Samarqand, 1330/1912), p. 221.

⁷² See note 15.

your Lord, satisfied and satisfying (89:28).⁷³ It is a withdrawal from all sins. {p. 17} Sins, moreover, are anything that veils you from God, the Exalted, in all degrees of this life or the next. It is obligatory for the seeker to withdraw from all that is sought other than Him, even from *wujūd*, as it has been said: “Your *wujūd* is a sin to which no other sin can be compared.”⁷⁴

[The Second Principle: Concerning Renunciation (al-Zuhd)]

The second principle is renunciation of this world (*al-dunyā*), which means to withdraw from seeking after this world, from its desires, from its lesser allures as well as its greater ones, from its wealth and status, just as at death all withdraw from it. Yet the reality of renunciation is that you renounce both this world and the next. Said the Prophet, may peace be upon him: “This life is forbidden for the people of the next life, and the next life is forbidden for the people of this life, yet both are forbidden for the people of God.”⁷⁵

[The Third Principle: Concerning Reliance on God (al-Tawakkul)]

The third principle is reliance on God, the Exalted, which means to withdraw from secondary causes (*al-asbāb*) and from cause-and-effect (*al-tasabbub*) altogether, trusting in God instead, just as such will occur at death, as He — the Exalted — says *And he who relies on God, then He suffices for him* (65:3).⁷⁶

[The Fourth Principle: Concerning Contentment (al-Qanāʾa)]

The fourth of them is contentment, which means to withdraw from the desires of the self (*al-shahawāt al-naḥṣāniyya*) and animalistic pleasures just as will occur at death — except for the unavoidable human needs forced upon one. Yet one should not be

⁷³ As discussed in the section on eschatology above, Kubrā seems to use the verse ironically, intimating that *every* soul, whether by choice or by force, upon death, will be pleased with God (that is, recognize His lordship) and be pleasing to Him (that is, submit). Compare to Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s description, “. . . the true meaning of the return is the turning back of human souls to the Divine Presence, either through choice, as with the souls of the felicitous, or through compulsion, as with the souls of the wretched.” *The Path of God’s Bondsmen*, p. 334.

⁷⁴ See note 30.

⁷⁵ This ḥadīth can be found in the *Jāmiʿ al-Ṣagħīr fī Aḥādīth al-Baṣīr al-Nadhīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1401/1981) of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Khuḍayrī al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), vol. 1, p. 656, #4269 with one minor difference: instead of “*humā*” (and *both* are forbidden), the ḥadīth here repeats “*al-dunyā wa al-ākḥīrā*” (and this world and the next are forbidden to the people of God). Al-ʿAjlūnī reports the same in his *Kaṣḥf al-Khaḥāʾ*, vol. 1, p. 410, #1314, in which he reviews its assessment by previous ḥadīth-specialists as unreliable in terms of its chain of transmission and attribution to Ibn ʿAbbās.

⁷⁶ Some manuscripts, as well as Māyil-Hirawī’s edition, have *al-kash* (acquisition) instead of *al-tasabbub*.

excessive regarding food, clothing, and residence, limiting oneself only to that which is absolutely necessary according to one's ability.

[The Fifth Principle: Concerning Seclusion (al-'Uzla)]

The fifth principle is seclusion, which means to withdraw by choice from interacting with people, by isolating oneself and cutting one's ties, just as will occur at death. This excludes being at the service of the shaykh who has reached attainment and acts as preceptor to him [the wayfarer]. Such a shaykh is to him [the wayfarer] just as a body-washer is to the dead body. He ought to be in the shaykh's hands [p. 18] as a dead body is in the hands of the body-washer, [leaving the shaykh] free to do with him as he wishes, in order to cleanse him in the water of sainthood (*al-walāya*) of the great impurity (*janāba*) that results from being estranged (*al-ajnabiyya*) and of the dirt that results from having been created (*lawth al-ḥudūth*).⁷⁷

The essence of seclusion is confining the senses through private retreat (*al-khalwa*) from unrestrained conduct in the sensory realm, for indeed every canker (*āfa*), every sedition (*fitna*), and every calamity that afflicted the spirit and gave potency to the self, fostering the self's attributes, came in through the dormer window of the senses. By means of the senses, the self led the spirit to the *Lowest of the Low* (95:5) and, through these senses, the self fettered the spirit and took mastery over it. Hence, through private retreat and isolating the senses, severed is the self's support from the lower life (*al-dunyā*), from Satan, and from the assistance of whim and desire, just as a doctor in treating the patient first prescribes safeguarding the patient from that which harms him, taking into consideration the causes of his sickness.⁷⁸ Through this, support for the ailment that comes from corrupt substances ends and the substances become purified thereby. It has been said, after all, that "abstention is foremost for every medicine." Thereupon the doctor will treat the patient with a purgative that eliminates corrupt substances from him and strengthens the natural faculties and the instinctual heat, so that by suppressing the nature [in its support of the corrupt substances] sickness withdraws from him and soundness is attracted.⁷⁹ Here [in this prescribed spiritual path] the purgative that follows abstention is perpetual remembrance.

⁷⁷ It should be noted that Hamadānī's version does not seem to translate *lawth al-ḥudūth*, instead extending the first impurity (*janābat al-ajnabiyya* or *khibāthat-i bigānigī*) to include cleansing the rusted heart of all otherness (*gbayriyyat*); *Aqrab al-Ṭuruq ilā Allāh*, p. 94. Meier traces the history of the image of the initiate as corpse and shaykh as body-washer in "Khurāsān and the End of Classical Sufism," *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, pp. 189–219, here p. 202.

⁷⁸ This interest in the finer points of medical treatment is echoed in the writings of Kubrā's pupil Najm al-Dīn Rāzī. See *The Path of God's Bondsmen*, pp. 256–8.

⁷⁹ Instinctual heat (*al-ḥarāra al-gharīziyya*), like other phrases in this segment, is a term common to classical Islamic medicine and is discussed by Ibn Sīnā. See *The Canon of Medicine (al-Qānūn fī'l-ṭibb)*, adapted by Laleh Bakhtiar from multiple translations (Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic World, 1999), sections 61, 58, and 62 on pages 27 and 28.

[*The Sixth Principle: Concerning Inseparableness from Remembrance*
(Mulāzamat al-Dhikr)]

The sixth principle is inseparableness from remembrance, which is withdrawal from remembering all other than God, the Exalted, by forgetting. God, the Exalted, has said: *And remember your Lord, once you forget* (18:24), that is, once you forget everything other than God, just as you will at death.

Remembrance, namely, the saying “there is no deity other than God,” has been likened to a purgative [p. 19] because it is an electuary composed of negation and affirmation.⁸⁰ With negation [that is, saying *lā ilāha* (“there is no deity”)], corrupt substances disappear, those in which are engendered the malady of the heart, the fettering of the spirit, and the rise in potency of the self along with the fostering of its attributes. These attributes of the self are the reprehensible self-pertaining character traits (*al-akblāq al-dhamīma al-naḥsāniyya*), the qualities of animal desire (*al-awṣāf al-shahwāniyya al-ḥaywāniyya*), and attachments to the two worlds.

Through the affirmation *illā Allāh* (“other than God”), soundness of the heart (*ṣiḥḥat al-qalb*) results, as well as the heart’s safety from the vile character traits that come from disorder in its essential temperament. A rebalancing of the heart’s temperament by means of its light occurs, as well as vivacity of the heart by means of the light of God, the Exalted. Thus, the spirit shines forth through the evidences of the Real and the self-disclosure of His essence and attributes: *and the Earth will gleam by the light of its Lord* (39:69), that is, the earth of the self. The darknesses of its attributes vanish from it *on the day the Earth will be changed into other than the Earth, as well as the Heavens, and they are presented before God, the One, the Overwhelmer* (14:48).

Thus, in accordance with the declaration, *Remember Me, I will remember you* (2:152), the state of remembering becomes exchanged with the state of being remembered, and the state of being remembered becomes exchanged with the state of remembering. He who remembers becomes annihilated in remembrance, and the one remembered remains, standing in as a vicegerent for the one who remembers. Thus, when you seek the one who remembers, you find the one remembered, and when you seek the one remembered, you find the one who remembers. “And when you behold me, you behold him, and when you behold him, you behold me.”⁸¹

⁸⁰ I have here preferred Māyil-Hirawī’s edition that has *tashbīb bi-l-dhikr bi-l-mushbil* versus Molé’s that has *nasīʿat al-mushbīliyya*. Two of Molé’s manuscripts (the Hekimoğlu manuscript called “H” and the University of Tehran manuscript probably from the 11th century AH called “B”) have *al-dhikr bi-l-mushbil*, which, when coupled with the possibility of misreading *nasīʿa* or *nasya* for *tashbīb* (or perhaps *nisba*), seems to support this reading.

⁸¹ This is a quotation from a poem of Ḥusayn ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj. The version attributed to al-Ḥallāj reads, “So when you behold me, you behold him / and when you behold him, you behold us.” Perhaps most relevant to this passage, al-Ḥallāj comments that “his spirit is my spirit, and my spirit is his spirit / who has ever seen two spirits alight in one body?” See *Dīwān al-Ḥallāj*, ed. Muḥammad Bāsil ‘Uyūn al-Sūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1423/2002), qaṣīda #81, pp. 158–9.

*[The Seventh Principle: Concentration upon God, the Exalted
(al-tawajjuh ilā Allāh ta‘ālā)]*

The seventh of these principles is concentration upon God with the entirety of one’s being, which means to withdraw from every caller that calls to other-than-the-Real, just as will occur at death. Thus, there remains for such a person nothing desired, loved, or aspired to, and no destination, other than God. {p. 20} Even if all the ranks of prophets and divinely-sent messengers were presented before him, he would not turn his attention to these things and away from God even for an instant. Junayd has said, “If an utterly veracious one were to draw near God for a million years and then turn away for one instant, then that which would escape him is greater than that which he has acquired.”

[The Eighth Principle: Concerning Patience (al-ṣabr)]

The eighth of these principles is patience, which means to withdraw from the self’s allotments, through striving and suffering, just as is the case with death. It is firmness in weaning the self from that to which it has grown accustomed and that which it loves, for the sake of edifying it and extinguishing its desires, to such an extent that it stands upright on the exemplary path for purifying the heart and polishing the spirit. God, may He be exalted, has said, *We made from among them leaders who would guide by Our command when they were patient and certain of our signs* (32:24).

[The Ninth Principle: Concerning Watchfulness (al-murāqaba)]

The ninth of these principles is watchfulness, which is a withdrawal from one’s power and strength, as is the case with death, focusing watchfully instead on the bestowals of the Real. It is turning one’s attention to the fragrant breaths of His graces, while turning away from that which is other than Him. It is to be immersed in the sea of love-longing for Him, and it is yearning to meet Him. The [wayfarer]’s heart craves tenderly for Him; his spirit groans plaintively to Him; he seeks aid of Him against Him; and he seeks succor from Him toward Him. All this, until God opens the door of His mercy, mercy which none can restrain, and He shuts the door of his torment, which no key can open, by means of a brilliant light that comes from the mercy of God upon the self. Then such darkness of the self’s propensity to command to evil vanishes in an instant, {p. 21} the likes of which does not vanish after thirty years of inner-combative exertions and ascetic practices, as God the Exalted has said, *except for whomever my Lord has mercy over* (12:53). They [those who travel the path of the Crafty Ones] are [now] the Choice Ones (*al-akhyār*). Rather, the evils of the self are exchanged for the excellences of the spirit, as He the Exalted has said *Those are the ones whose evil deeds God changes into excellent deeds* (25:70). Thus, they are the Pious Ones (*al-abrār*). Rather, the “excellent deeds of the pious ones are evil deeds

for the near ones,”⁸² so the evils of the near ones are exchanged for the excellences of His graces, according to His the Exalted’s saying *For those who do excellently there is the greatest good and even more augmented* (10:26). This augmentation corresponds to the graces of the Real; *that is a favor of God, which He gives to whom He wills* (57:21).

[The Tenth Principle: Satisfaction (al-riḍā)]

The tenth of these principles is satisfaction (*al-riḍā*), which is withdrawal from the satisfaction of one’s self by entering into the satisfaction of God the Exalted, by means of surrendering to His beginningless determinations and by entrusting oneself to His eternal designs, without turning away or protesting, just as is the case upon death, as one of them has said:

My love-longing for him is a duty, whether he inclines fondly or turns away harshly.
Sweet is his drinking-spring, whether turbid or clear.
I have delegated to the beloved my affair, in total,
So if he wants, he gives me life, and, if he wants, he destroys.

[Conclusion]

Therefore, God will give life to whosoever dies volitionally from these attributes of darkness, through the light of His attentiveness, as God the Exalted has said: *What, then, is the one who was dead, but whom We gave life and made for him a light with which he walks among the people like the one whose example is in darknesses from which he will not withdraw?* (2:122). In other words, is the one who has died from the attributes of darkness in the human tree, to whom We give life through Our attributes of {p. 22} lordliness, for whom We have made a light from among the lights of Our beauty with which he walks (walking with that light, and in accordance with His saying “he walks among the people,” walking among the rest of the people) with the ability to appraise people’s hearts (*firāsa*) and witness their states, is such a person like the one who remains in those darknesses of the human tree, from which one will not withdraw except through the resplendence of the believer-state and the fruitfulness of sainthood (*al-walāya*) and prophethood (*al-nubuwwa*)? So, if God wills, understand! And praise be to God, lord of the worlds, and blessings and peace be upon our doyen Muḥammad, and his family and companions, all of them.

⁸² See *Aḥādīth-i Mathnawī*, #173, p. 65. Abū Sa’īd al-Kharrāz (d. 286/899), the famous Sufi, is one possible source for this saying, although the traditional Sunni ḥadīth specialists agree that it is not a ḥadīth. See Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Bāqī al-Zarqānī (d. 1122/1710-1), who — like al-‘Ajlūnī mentioned twice above in the notes — has based his work on the compilation of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497), as apparent in his title: *Mukhtaṣar al-Maqāṣid al-Ḥasana fī Bayān Kathīr min al-Aḥādīth al-Mushtabara ‘alā al-ʿAlīna*, ed. Muḥammad ibn Luṭfī al-Ṣabbāgh, fourth edition (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1409/1989), #378 (and its accompanying note), p. 113.